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Commission on the Status of Women Background Guide 2019

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2019 National Model United Nations Conference in Washington, DC (NMUN•DC)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). This year's staff is: Director Kelsea Gillespie and Assistant Director Tara Kwan. Kelsea holds a BA in English from Concordia University of Edmonton and is pursuing a joint JD/MA at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University focusing on international law. She currently works for the Canada Foundation for Innovation and ABS Canada. Tara graduated with a BA in Political Science from the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. She currently works as a program assistant for the nonprofit organization Program for Torture Victims which helps asylum seekers in Southern California.

The topics under discussion for CSW are:

- I. The 20th Anniversary of 1325: Reviewing Progress on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda
- II. The Link between Women's Empowerment and Sustainable Development

Established in 1946, CSW is the principal intergovernmental body dedicated to advocating for and advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women across the world. CSW prepares reports at its annual two week sessions to be presented to the Economic and Social Council on the status of women's equality. Additionally, it produces documents outlining agreed conclusions on the priority theme discussed at its annual plenary meeting and adopts multi-year work programs to guide its future work. Delegates on CSW will have the opportunity to emulate the normative and best practice-setting approaches of the Commission's annual plenary meetings.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to conduct additional research, explore your Member State's policies in-depth, and examine the policies of other Member States to improve your ability to negotiate and reach consensus. In preparation for the conference, each delegation will use their research to draft and submit a [position paper](#). Guidelines are available in the [NMUN Position Paper Guide](#).

The [NMUN website](#) has many additional resources, including two that are essential both in preparation for the conference and as a resource during the conference. They are:

1. The [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#), which explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not discuss the topics or agenda with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#), which includes the long and short form of the rules as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretary-General Emma Ogg at usgemma.dc@nmun.org or Secretary-General Chase Mitchell at secgen.dc@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Sincerely,
Kelsea Gillespie, Director
Tara Kwan, Assistant Director



Committee Overview

Introduction

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and is the principal international body for discussion on gender equality and the empowerment of women.¹ CSW and its secretariat, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), have increasingly become major entities in the international system, especially as there is widespread agreement on the need for the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women but slow progress.²

In 1946, the first efforts by the United Nations (UN) to address issues of gender equality were carried out in a sub-commission of the Commission on Human Rights.³ As a result of the debates in 1946, CSW was established as a fully functional commission under the auspices of ECOSOC through ECOSOC resolution 11(II).⁴ The CSW's main priority is to mainstream gender equality within the UN system and link women's empowerment to sustainable development; it reports to ECOSOC annually on its efforts.⁵ UN Women provides support throughout all features of the work performed by CSW and, furthermore, serves to help facilitate civil society actors' participation in the Commission.⁶

CSW has been a main forum for discussion in the ongoing process of creating and implementing international norms related to the advancement of women.⁷ CSW's work is mainly guided by the principles of the 1979 *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, the 1993 *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, the 1995 *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (BPfA), and the outcome document of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly as a follow-up to BPfA, entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century" (2000).⁸ The BPfA is particularly significant in guiding CSW's work, as it outlined the goals that the international community set in order to achieve gender equality, such as ensuring the full implementation of women's human rights and promoting women's economic independence.⁹ CSW is also influenced by various UN Security Council resolutions, with resolution 1325 (2000) on "Women and Peace and Security" among the most significant.¹⁰

Beijing +20, a conference held in recognition of the 20th anniversary of the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, was held in 2015, the same year in which the international community was transitioning from the Millennium Development Goals to the newly adopted SDGs.¹¹ Beijing+20 drew particular attention to 12 critical areas of concern for the continued empowerment of women, women and economy, women and the media, and women and poverty.¹² The challenges toward the implementation of the BPfA were addressed during CSW 59, which concluded with an examination of potential opportunities for the global community to achieve gender equality in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.¹³

¹ UN Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015.

² UN Women, *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2018; UN Women, *A Brief History of the CSW*.

³ UN CSW, *Short History of the Commission on the Status of Women*, 2006, p. 1.

⁴ UN Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015.

⁵ Ibid; New Zealand, Foreign Ministry of Trade and Affairs, *United Nations Handbook 2017-18*, 2017.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ UN Women, *A Brief History of the CSW*.

⁸ UN CSW, *Short History of the Commission on the Status of Women*, 2006, pp. 9-15.

⁹ UN Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² UN Women, *Summary Report: The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20*, 2015.

¹³ UN Women, *CSW59/Beijing+20 (2015)*, 2015.

Governance, Structure, and Membership

CSW consists of 45 Member States elected for four-year terms.¹⁴ The allocation of seats follows proportional geographical distribution and is comprised of 13 African states, 11 Asia-Pacific states, four Eastern European states, nine Latin American and Caribbean states, and eight Western European and Other states.¹⁵ The Chair and the four Vice-Chairs of CSW's Bureau rotate without specific geographical regulations and are elected for two-year terms.¹⁶ The Bureau addresses all necessary preparation for the annual meetings of CSW, identifying emerging issues, trends, focus areas, or possible new approaches to implementing the BPfA and all other relevant policy guidelines, and provides its findings as a summary of the Chair.¹⁷ This work is done in consultation with all the Member States of the Commission and the regional groups, experts, and other relevant stakeholders, promoting interactive dialogue, such as high-level ministerial panels or expert group meetings.¹⁸ The Bureau is supported in its actions by UN Women, which provides CSW with reports on the discussed topics, as well as national and regional reviews on the implementation of the policies set forth by CSW and ECOSOC.¹⁹ CSW works together with the General Assembly and ECOSOC in a multi-tiered intergovernmental process to provide normative guidance to achieve gender equality.²⁰

In 2010, the UN restructured its operational framework for women's issues in order to improve efficiency and streamline its work on gender equality.²¹ The four major UN agencies that addressed women's issues merged and resulted in the establishment of UN Women.²² UN Women is the Secretariat of CSW and provides guidance on operational activities aimed at the advancement of women.²³ UN Women supports the work of CSW substantively by providing annual documentation on critical areas of concern regarding gender equality and facilitates interaction between the Commission and civil society organizations (CSOs) at its annual meeting.²⁴ Moreover, the Commission has a Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women, which produces a yearly report to CSW identifying "trends and patterns of reliably-attested injustice and discriminatory practices against women."²⁵

In June 2016, ECOSOC adopted resolution 2016/3 to provide recommendations and define the future organization and methods of work of CSW.²⁶ This resolution had not only officially set forth the priority themes to be addressed throughout the CSW's 61st, 62nd, and 63rd sessions, it also requested CSW to deliver recommendations during its 62nd session for priority areas for the year 2020 "so as to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls."²⁷ Finally, ECOSOC asked CSW to coordinate and deliver thematic reviews during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development to determine the progress on the SDGs.²⁸ The Forum, which was held in July 2018, discussed the importance of achieving gender equality through safeguarding the human rights of women and girls, and encouraging the inclusion of women in society to increase sustainable development.²⁹ The importance of gender equality to the realization of all SDGs was also re-emphasized.³⁰

¹⁴ UN Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015.

¹⁵ New Zealand, Foreign Ministry of Trade and Affairs, *United Nations Handbook 2017-18*, 2017.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ UN CSW, *Report on the fifty-ninth session (E/2015/27-E/CN.6/2015/10)*, 2015, pp. 11-15.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ UN General Assembly, *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*, 2010, pp. 9-11.

²⁰ UN General Assembly, *Proposed strategic framework for the period 2016-2017: Programme 14, Gender equality and empowerment of women (A/69/6 (Prog. 14))*, 2014, p. 2.

²¹ UN General Assembly, *System-wide coherence (A/RES/64/289)*, 2010, pp. 8-14.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁵ UN Women, *CSW59/Beijing+20 (2015)*, 2015.

²⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Multi-year programme of work of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/RES/2016/3)*, 2016.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ PeaceWomen, *Sustainable Development 2018*, 2018.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The original mandate of CSW, adopted in 1946, was to provide “recommendations and reports to ECOSOC on promoting women’s rights in political, economic, social, and educational fields... [and] urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women’s rights.”³¹ This mandate was substantially expanded as a follow-up to the UN Decade of Women from 1975 to 1985 and the Third and Fourth World Conferences on Women in Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995.³² As a result of the Fourth World Conference and the adoption of the BPfA, ECOSOC decided that CSW, as its primary responsibility, must take actions to mainstream “a gender perspective in policies and programs,” as well as assist ECOSOC and Member States in the implementation and achievement of the goals set in the BPfA.³³ This was re-emphasized at the 23rd special session of the General Assembly in 2000, which set the goal of achieving full gender equality.³⁴

The main functions and primary responsibilities are outlined in the original mandate of CSW, its expansions, and several ECOSOC resolutions on the methods of work of the Commission.³⁵ These methods of work have been examined and expanded several times by ECOSOC over the years, most recently in ECOSOC resolutions 2015/6 and 2016/3, in order to ensure coherence with the work of the Council.³⁶ The aim of these expansions was to set an effective approach to mainstream gender within the entire UN system and engage in discussions with governmental representatives, experts, and non-governmental actors to identify gaps and challenges to gender equality.³⁷ At its annual meetings, CSW adopts resolutions that are included in an annual report to ECOSOC.³⁸

CSW meets annually to provide policy guidance to UN Member States and other relevant UN entities in the form of Agreed Conclusions on its priorities and review theme and resolutions on emerging issues and trends in gender equality and women’s empowerment.³⁹ CSW continues to organize the Beijing reviews, which are often used as a platform to foster political will for actions that promote gender equality recommit Member States to relevant frameworks and goals.⁴⁰ CSW also contributes to the annual theme of ECOSOC, strengthening the Council’s impact, and works closely with all other gender-specific UN entities, such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, to augment their work.⁴¹

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

At the 62nd CSW session, draft resolution E/CN.6/2018/L.6 on the “Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women” formally declared the Commission’s plans to review Member States’ implementation of the BPfA at its sixty-fourth session in the year 2020, with the goal being to identify the current obstacles which continue to hinder the achievement of gender equality globally.⁴² In its most recent session, held between March 11 to March 22 of 2019, CSW adopted Agreed Conclusions (E/CN.6/2019/L.3) on the priority theme, *Social Protection Systems, Access to Public*

³¹ UN ECOSOC, *Commission on the Status of Women (Res. 11(II))*, 1946, p. 525.

³² UN CSW, *Short History of the Commission on the Status of Women*, 2006, pp. 9-15.

³³ UN ECOSOC, *Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women (E/RES/1996/6)*, 1996; UN General Assembly, *Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/RES/55/71)*, 2000.

³⁴ UN Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Multi-year programme of work of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/RES/2016/3)*, 2016; UN ECOSOC, *Future organization and Methods of Work of the Commission on the Status of Women (A/RES/2015/6)*, 2015.

³⁷ UN Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Future organization and methods of work of CSW (E/RES/2015/6)*, 2015, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-5.

⁴² UN CSW, *Future Organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/CN.6/2018/L.6)*, 2018.

*Services and Sustainable Infrastructure for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls.*⁴³ CSW called on Member States to adopt policies that focus on improving infrastructure to increase women's access to social services, as well as policies that focus on improving current infrastructure to make it safer for women.⁴⁴ Several other topics debated and discussed at the session included the importance of properly valuing women's contributions in the household, making transportation safer for women, and increasing women's access to social protection.⁴⁵

The 64th session, scheduled to be held between March 9 to March 20 of 2020, will mark the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the *Beijing Declaration* and the 5-year anniversary of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.⁴⁶ The 64th session will have a strong focus on healthcare, its role in empowering women, and improving women's access to quality medical services.⁴⁷

Conclusion

CSW has been working towards achieving gender equality by setting global standards, establishing a legally binding framework, and promoting women's rights in all its projects and communications.⁴⁸ In the past several years, the international community has increased its focus on achieving equality for women and SDGs.⁴⁹ The Commission has developed education and training programs, and gathered data to help improve and define avenues for achieving gender equality.⁵⁰ With the help of CSOs, its annual meetings, and support from UN Women, CSW can continue to identify new challenges to gender equality and to effectively advise ECOSOC to take action to empower women.⁵¹

Annotated Bibliography

United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. (2019). *Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls: Agreed Conclusions (E/CN.6/2019/L.3)* [Draft Resolution]. Retrieved 10 April 2019 from:

<https://undocs.org/en/E/CN.6/2019/L.3>

The 2019 Agreed Conclusions offers a summarized review of decisions and conclusions arrived at during CSW63. Additionally, it gives an update on the status of women and how certain ongoing gender equality goals are progressing versus others. This is a great resource for seeing CSW's most up-to-date goals and perspectives to help with steering delegations during conference.

United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. (2018). *Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/CN.6/2018/L.6)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 5 August 2018 from: <http://undocs.org/E/CN.6/2018/L.6>

This resolution, adopted during the CSW's sixty-second session, addresses particular areas of improvement in order to achieve the progressive realization of gender equality across the global arena. This resolution is one of the most recently adopted by CSW and demonstrates its ability to use discussions and turn them into global, concerted action. Delegates will find this very useful in researching CSW's mandate and current points of focus.

⁴³ UN CSW, *Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls: Agreed Conclusions (E/CN.6/2019/L.3)*, 2019.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ UN Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015.

⁴⁹ UN DPI, *Economic and Social Council Adopts Texts on Sustainable Development Goals, Women, Non-communicable Diseases, as Coordination, Management Session Commences (ECOSOC/6846)*, 2017.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ UN ECOSOC, *Ways and means to further enhance the impact of the work of the Commission on the Status of Women: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2014/14)*, 2013.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2015). *Beijing+20: Recommitting for Women and Girls* [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved 27 August 2018 from: http://www2.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/how%20we%20work/intergovsupp/ort/unw_beijing_brief_v3%20pdf.pdf?v=2&d=20150226T212442

This source is a useful introduction to Beijing+20 and to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The implementation of the Beijing Declaration comes in a crucial moment for the UN as a whole, being related to several of the SDGs. The Declaration and its implementation are leading the work of CSW through the achievement of the SDGs, before the deadline of 2030. This brief overview of Beijing+20 is a useful starting-source for further research on the issues the Commission is dealing with.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2015). *Commission on the Status of Women* [Website]. Retrieved 27 August 2018 from: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>

This website is an ideal starting point for understanding CSW and serves as the first overview on its foundation, mandate, methods of work, and multi-year programs of work. It is a great source for information on the various priorities and reviews themes the Commission has dealt with in recent years, especially the 61st (2017) and 62nd (2018) sessions. For further research, it provides links to the history, official outcome documents, and non-governmental organization participation, as well as the CSW Communications Procedure of the Working Group.

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[/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/sg%20report_synthesis-en_web.pdf?la=en&vs=5547](#)

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I. The 20th Anniversary of 1325: Reviewing Progress on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

“The trend is, women are being excluded from the peace processes. The ones who do not wage war seem to be disqualified from making peace, while those who may be implicated in making war, seem to find it easier to be at the peace tables.”⁵²

Introduction

In 2000, the United Nations (UN) Security Council adopted resolution 1325 titled “Women, peace and security,” marking the first time that the UN Security Council addressed the issues facing women in conflict and post-conflict settings and the first time the Security Council recognized the role of women in maintaining peace and security.⁵³ Resolution 1325 establishes four pillars for the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda: protection, prevention, participation, and peacebuilding and recovery.⁵⁴ The protection pillar calls for safeguarding both women and girls from all forms of violence, including sexual, physical, and gender-based violence.⁵⁵ The prevention pillar encompasses a more proactive approach, calling for early intervention, and protecting and promoting women’s rights through legislative action.⁵⁶ The participation pillar emphasizes the importance of women’s participation post-conflict and in decision-making, as a method to help prevent conflict.⁵⁷ The peacebuilding and recovery pillar calls for a gender-based approach to humanitarian aid, particularly in refugee camps.⁵⁸

During 2017-2018, more countries experienced violence and conflict than at any time in the past three decades.⁵⁹ Forced displacement is at an all-time high, with 68.5 million people displaced in 2017.⁶⁰ The fear of rape and violence is a significant factor in discouraging displaced women from returning home.⁶¹ Conflict and violence increases the likelihood for other human rights violations against women, including forced, early, and child marriage, and sexual violence.⁶² The international community has placed significant resources on promoting peace, but 90% of peace agreements fail within the first five years.⁶³ According to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), when women are meaningfully involved in peacebuilding processes, stagnated negotiations are more likely to resume and be more effective.⁶⁴ Peace agreements resulting from negotiations where women are meaningfully involved are 35% more likely to last more than 15 years.⁶⁵

⁵² UN Women, *Executive Director remarks at the UN Security Council open debate on women, peace and security*, 2018.

⁵³ UN Security Council, *Women and peace and security (S/RES/1325(2000))*, 2000; UNIFEM, *Security Council Resolution 1325 Annotated and Explained*.

⁵⁴ UN Security Council, *Women and peace and security (S/RES/1325(2000))*, 2000; United States Institute for Peace, *What is UNSCR 1325? An Explanation of the Landmark Resolution*; UN Women, *Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325*, 2015, p. 33.

⁵⁵ United States Institute for Peace, *What is UNSCR 1325? An Explanation of the Landmark Resolution*; UNIFEM, *Security Council Resolution 1325 Annotated and Explained*.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ United States Institute for Peace, *What is UNSCR 1325? An Explanation of the Landmark Resolution*; UNIFEM, *CEDAW and Security Council Resolution 1325: A Quick Guide*, pp. 5-7.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*; UN Women, *Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325*, 2015, p. 33; UNIFEM, *Security Council Resolution 1325 Annotated and Explained*.

⁵⁹ UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2018/900)*, 2018, p. 2.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, *Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence S/2018/250*, 2018, p. 6.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

⁶³ UN Department of Public Information, *SDG Advocate Alaa Murabit on the necessity of women’s inclusion in peace and security*, 2019; UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2018/900)*, 2018, p. 2.

⁶⁴ UN Women, *In Brief: Peace and Security*; UN Women, *Facts and figures: Peace and security*.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

International and Regional Framework

Peace and security are fundamental to the *Charter of the United Nations* and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which guarantees human rights to all people regardless of gender.⁶⁶ The General Assembly adopted the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) in 1979 and highlighted the importance of gender equality.⁶⁷ In 1995, the international community adopted the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, covering twelve areas in women's rights, including violence and armed conflict.⁶⁸ In 2000, Security Council resolution 1325 recognized the unique and disproportionate impact of violence against women and their perpetual exclusion from peacebuilding processes.⁶⁹ Subsequent Security Council resolutions on WPS (1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2242, and 2467) call for the end of violence against women (VAW), and emphasize the role of women in preventing violent extremism and in building lasting peace.⁷⁰

The 2015 High-Level Panel on Peace Operations and Security Council resolution 2242 (2015) highlighted the important role of coordination and cooperation between UN entities relating to international peace and security, and the specific role UN Women (the secretariat of CSW) has in coordinating UN efforts related to gender equality and women's rights.⁷¹ UN Women is responsible for coordinating work on resolution 1325 and provides programmatic support to countries implementing it.⁷² Specifically, the 2015 High-Level Panel on Peace Operations recommended that peacekeeping missions have access to policy advice, and operational and substantive support from UN Women for the implementation of resolution 1325.⁷³

In 2015, the UN adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, providing a strategic roadmap in 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to advance human rights, ensure greater gender equality, enhance access to basic services, and build capacity for developing inclusive societies.⁷⁴ Eleven out of the 17 SDGs have gender-specific indicators.⁷⁵ SDG 5, "Gender Equality," has targets and indicators on eliminating conflict and promoting peace, including ending discrimination, VAW, child marriage, and female genital mutilation.⁷⁶ SDG 16, "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions," has targets for building peaceful and inclusive societies, with indicators related to women and sexual violence.⁷⁷

⁶⁶ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948; Charter of the United Nations, 1945.

⁶⁷ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*, 1979.

⁶⁸ UN Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome*, 2014.

⁶⁹ UN Security Council, *Women and peace and security (S/RES/1325 (2000))*, 2000.

⁷⁰ UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/1820 (2008))*, 2008; UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/1888 (2009))*, 2009; UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/1889 (2009))*, 2009; UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/1960 (2010))*, 2010; UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/2106 (2013))*, 2013; UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/2122 (2013))*, 2013; UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/2242 (2015))*, 2015; UN Security Council, *Women, Peace and Security: Sexual violence in conflict (S/RES/2467 (2019))*, 2019; United States Institute for Peace, *What is UNSCR 1325? An Explanation of the Landmark Resolution*.

⁷¹ UN General Assembly, *Report on the High-Level Panel on Peace Operations on uniting our strengths for peace: politics, partnerships, and people (A/70/95)*, 2015, p. 80; UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/2242 (2015))*, 2015.

⁷² UN General Assembly, *Report on the High-Level Panel on Peace Operations on uniting our strengths for peace: politics, partnerships, and people (A/70/95)*, 2015, p. 80.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁷⁵ UN Women, *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2018.

⁷⁶ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁷⁷ UN Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform, *Sustainable Development Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*, 2018.

Role of the International System

Many UN entities are involved in the WPS agenda, including the Security Council, UN Women and CSW, United Nations Peacekeeping, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO).⁷⁸ CSW's role in the WPS agenda is to write policy recommendations and agreed upon conclusions for the international community, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society organizations (CSOs); UN Women plays a more direct role in coordinating the implementation of programs and initiatives.⁷⁹ CSW can directly address WPS issues by agreeing on actions to advance gender equality through resolutions and conclusions, and contributing to issues involving gender equality in the work of other UN bodies.⁸⁰

Additionally, NGOs and CSOs often consult on and are engaged in the WPS agenda.⁸¹ The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (NGOWG), a coalition representing 18 international NGOs, (such as Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, Amnesty International, Oxfam, etc.) advocates for women's rights and representation in international peace and security and also distributes Monthly Action Points detailing country and thematic-specific recommendations for implementing the WPS agenda.⁸² Other NGOs, like PeaceWomen, are similarly involved in advocacy and monitoring of UN progress implementing the WPS agenda.⁸³

On a more state-focused level, the Informal Expert Group (IEG) on Women, Peace and Security, supported by UN Women and established by Security Council resolution 2242 (2015), reviews country-specific situations to help the Security Council monitor and track implementation of the WPS agenda.⁸⁴ Ultimately, resolution 1325 is implemented by UN Member States through National Action Plans (NAPs), drafted and submitted to the Security Council.⁸⁵ WPS implementation at the local level is done through NAPs, although only 55 Member States have submitted NAPs.⁸⁶ In order to implement resolution 1325 and realize the WPS agenda, UN Women has identified that encouraging Member States to develop more robust, inclusive NAPs is key.⁸⁷ Regionally, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Pacific Islands Forum, and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development have all adopted regional action plans (RAPs) on implementing the WPS agenda.⁸⁸ Further, the League of Arab States has developed a strategy, and the African Union launched a 5-year gender, peace, and security initiative in 2014.⁸⁹ Regional plans not only reinforce and strengthen NAPs by promoting peace, security, and human rights more broadly across a region, but also encourage Member States to develop NAPs.⁹⁰ Regional organizations also help facilitate sharing of best practices, cooperation, and documentation of lessons

⁷⁸ UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/2242 (2015))*, 2015; PBC, *Peacebuilding Commission's Gender Strategy*, 2016.

⁷⁹ UN Women, *In Brief: Peace and Security*, 2016; UN Women, *Commission on the Status of Women: Outcomes*, 2019.

⁸⁰ UN Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*.

⁸¹ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, *Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (S/2018/250)*, 2018; UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/2242 (2015))*, 2015, p. 3.

⁸² NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, *Our Work*, 2019; NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, *Advocacy*, 2019.

⁸³ PeaceWomen, *About Us*.

⁸⁴ UN Security Council, *Letter dated 22 December 2016 from the Permanent Representatives of Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/1106)*, 2016.

⁸⁵ United States Institute for Peace, *What is UNSCR 1325? An Explanation of the Landmark Resolution*; UNIFEM, *Security Council Resolution 1325 Annotated and Explained*.

⁸⁶ UN Women, *Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325*, 2015, p. 32.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 238-250.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 256.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 256-7.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 257.

learned.⁹¹ Regional implementation is not just geographically based; NATO's RAP is a commitment implementing resolution 1325 within the context of a military alliance with a mandate to uphold international peace and security.⁹²

Challenges to Implementation

A multitude of challenges exist to the implementation of resolution 1325, particularly the rise of violent extremism, the persistence of gender inequality, and lack of accountability measures.⁹³ Violent extremism and messages of intolerance and hatred impact international peace and security, disproportionately affect women, and can lead to acts of terrorism.⁹⁴ The UN's *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism* takes a gendered approach with provisions for gender equality, inclusive responses, and data collection, and takes note of the important role of women in peacebuilding and countering extremism.⁹⁵ In line with Security Council resolutions 2242 and 1325's participation pillar, the *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism* notes the importance of women's participation in leadership and tackling gender inequality through empowerment to prevent violent extremism.⁹⁶

A lack of accountability measures and political will can also hinder the implementation of resolution 1325.⁹⁷ Out of the NAPs that have been submitted, many lack enforcement mechanisms or budgets to support their implementation.⁹⁸ Political will and motivation on the WPS agenda shift over time, as evidenced by Security Council resolution 2467 (2018), which differed from previous WPS resolutions on providing access to reproductive healthcare for survivors of sexual violence in conflict as a result of a change in position by the United States of America.⁹⁹ These types of regressions exacerbate gender inequality and impacts the response for survivors, who are disproportionately women.¹⁰⁰

Progressing the implementation of resolution 1325 through data collection

Another component of implementing the WPS agenda is accurate and disaggregated data collection, especially in post-conflict situations.¹⁰¹ The ability to collect quality data and produce reliable statistics has increased substantially since the adoption of resolution 1325, but many gaps remain.¹⁰² Part of the issue is the lack of understanding of the value of data and statistics, local capacity, and conflict itself.¹⁰³ The UN Statistical Commission endorsed an international standard for data collection, but many Member States still struggle with implementation.¹⁰⁴ For instance, many records of police-reported incidents of sexual violence do not include gender-based information.¹⁰⁵

Data collection and subsequent analysis can inform the international community about the issues preventing the full implementation of resolution 1325, including statistics and information about sexual violence towards women.¹⁰⁶ Collecting disaggregated data and accurate statistics helps to promote not

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid, p. 258.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ UN General Assembly, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/674)*, 2015.

⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 18.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ UN Women, *Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325*, 2015, p. 14.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Just Security, *Gutting the Substance of a Security Council Resolution on Sexual Violence*, 2019.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid; UN Women, *The Story of Resolution 1325 | Women, Peace and Security*.

¹⁰¹ UN Women, *Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325*, 2015, pp. 198, 262, 283.

¹⁰² Ibid, pp. 316-7.

¹⁰³ Ibid, p. 317.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 315; UN Security Council, *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/1960 (2010))*.

only the WPS agenda, but also the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.¹⁰⁷ According to UN Women, empirical data has been substantial in advancing the WPS agenda, and the important role of women's participation in decision-making roles and in peace processes.¹⁰⁸

Conclusion

Despite the number of displaced persons and countries experiencing armed conflict increasing, gender inclusion in peacebuilding processes is likely to create longer lasting and more sustainable peace going forward.¹⁰⁹ In 2018, the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, applauded what progress there has been, but also called for Member States to renew their commitments to the WPS agenda.¹¹⁰ She noted that while military spending has reached almost 1.75 trillion USD globally, the international community is seeing disappointing statistics and indicators relating to women and girls.¹¹¹ Most Member State speeches on WPS at the Security Council focus on their own successes and call on others to make improvements without considering the overall implementation of the agenda.¹¹² UN Women and CSW are in a unique position to focus on implementation, especially the participation pillar.¹¹³

Further Research

Moving forward, delegates should consider questions such as: How can the implementation of resolution 1325 help address violent extremism's and terrorism's impacts on women? How can CSW promote linkages between the WPS agenda and the SDGs? How can more Member States be encouraged to develop NAPs? How can Member States be encouraged to adopt NAPs that include both gender in peacebuilding and have sufficient strategies for implementation? How can CSW or UN Women be involved in helping more Member States with these processes? How can the international community create more accountability for implementing resolution 1325 and the WPS agenda? How might NGOs and CSOs be leveraged to help with realizing the pillars of resolution 1325?

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This report outlines important information specifically on the issue of sexual violence in conflict. The report contains conflict-specific information and recommendations from the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence, outlining systemic issues and recommendations for actions moving forward. Delegates will find this report informative and helpful in their research, as it provides excellent context for some of the disproportionate effects that conflict has on women and girls.

United Nations Development Fund for Women. (n.d.). *Security Council Resolution 1325 Annotated and Explained*. Retrieved 1 March 2019 from: http://www.conflictrecovery.org/bin/Annotated_1325.pdf

This document provides a paragraph-by-paragraph explanation of Security Council resolution 1325. It provides context for why the Security Council drafted and adopted this resolution, including the work that led up to resolution 1325, and explains what each paragraph accomplishes. Delegates will find this source extremely helpful as a starting

¹⁰⁷ UN Women, *Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325*, 2015, p. 318.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 40.

¹⁰⁹ UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2018/900)*, 2018, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ UN Women, *Executive Director remarks at the UN Security Council open debate on women, peace and security*, 2018.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² UN Department of Public Information, *Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security*.

¹¹³ UN Women, *In Brief: Peace and Security*, 2016; UN Women, *Commission on the Status of Women: Outcomes*, 2019.

point in their research for understanding the impact and purpose of resolution 1325. It also details the four pillars for the women, peace and security agenda: participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. (2015). *Preventing Conflict Transforming Justice Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325* [Report]. Retrieved 1 March 2019 from:

[https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/UNW-GLOBAL-STUDY-1325-2015%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/UNW-GLOBAL-STUDY-1325-2015%20(1).pdf)

This Global Study provides a detailed, comprehensive overview on the development, implementation, and future of resolution 1325. Its 14 chapters provide an overview of issues relating to the WPS agenda, data and statistics, as well as recommendations for the UN and the broader international community. Delegates will find this source instrumental in completing their understanding of the WPS agenda, current developments, and possibilities for action moving forward. Chapters 3, 8, and 10-12 are particularly important for understanding the WPS agenda and resolution 1325.

United Nations, Security Council. (2018). *Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2018/900)* [Report]. Retrieved 1 March 2019 from: <https://undocs.org/S/2018/900>

This report is the most recent report by the Secretary-General on the women, peace and security agenda. It provides an excellent summary of the current and on-going challenges to women's involvement in peacebuilding and for implementing resolution 1325. The report also highlights reasons for including women in the peace and security agenda. It provides facts and figures on the number of peace agreements that have gender provisions from 2010-2017 and context for the National Action Plans of Member States. Delegates will find this report useful as it represents a succinct summary of the work done to date on the women and peace and security agenda.

United States Institute for Peace. (n.d.). *What is UNSCR 1325? An Explanation of the Landmark Resolution on Women, Peace and Security* [Website]. Retrieved 1 March 2019 from:

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The United States Institute for Peace is a non-partisan, American government-funded organization that helps build capacity for peace and development in conflict-affected countries and helps train the US military and diplomats on peacebuilding. Their website has detailed information about the context of resolution 1325 and its four pillars (participation, prevention, protection, and peacebuilding and recovery). Delegates will find this source particularly useful when they are beginning their research. This website provides information on subsequent Security Council resolutions and also basic information on the implementation of resolution 1325.

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II. The Link Between Women's Empowerment and Sustainable Development

“Investment in gender-responsive social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure is critical to free up women’s time, support their mobility, enhance their access to economic opportunities and strengthen their resilience to shocks.”¹¹⁴

Introduction

On September 25, 2015, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which set global targets for economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection.¹¹⁵ SDG 5 on Gender Equality focuses on women’s empowerment, including removing the cultural and structural that women face so they can reach their full potential.¹¹⁶ Since women make up half of the global population, their disenfranchisement has a magnified impact on sustainable development.¹¹⁷

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) works directly with actors who are ensuring the implementation of gender equality as a cross-cutting component across all 17 SDGs.¹¹⁸ SDG 5, because of its links with the other goals, has a multiplier effect on global progress on the SDGs.¹¹⁹ Economically, reducing the gender gap in the labor market (SDG 8) could increase global employment by 189 million or 5.3%, raising global GDP by 3.9% or 5.8 trillion by 2025 and reducing global poverty (SDG 1).¹²⁰ SDG 4, Quality Education, is integral to social mobility and economic growth, yet two-thirds of the world’s 750 million illiterate people are women.¹²¹ Women’s active participation in politics correlates to more democratic societies and more legislation on societal well-being, such as education and reproductive rights (SDG 16).¹²² Women are disproportionately affected by climate change (SDG 13); they are mainly responsible for food security (SDG 2) and water collection (SDG 6) in developing countries, so sustainable development directly impacts their welfare (SDGs 14 and 15).¹²³ Although the status of women has improved worldwide, economic, political, and social gaps in gender equality remain and affect the SDGs.¹²⁴

International and Regional Framework

The 1984 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* enumerated rights regarding fair work, adequate standards of living, and education, regardless of gender.¹²⁵ The General Assembly adopted the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) in 1979, an international bill of women’s rights that calls for the end of gender-based discrimination.¹²⁶ Article 3 of CEDAW recognizes Member States’ role in the advancement of women and achieving gender equality.¹²⁷ The *Fourth World Conference on Women* in 1985 resulted in the *Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for*

¹¹⁴ UN Women, *Opening statement by Under-Secretary General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, at the 63rd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women*, 2019.

¹¹⁵ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹¹⁶ UN SDGs, *The Sustainable Development Agenda*, 2019.

¹¹⁷ UN Women, *Women’s Empowerment Principles: Equality Means Business*, 2011.

¹¹⁸ UN Women, *Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2018, pp. 37-40.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 73; UN Women, *Monitoring Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Opportunities and Challenges*, 2015, p. 6; UN ECOSOC, *Multi-year programme of work of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/RES/2016/3)*, 2016.

¹²⁰ UN Women, *Gender Equality as an Accelerator for Achieving the SDGs*, 2018, p. 12.

¹²¹ UNESCO, *eAtlas of Gender Inequality in Education*, 2019

¹²² UN Women, *Gender Equality as an Accelerator for Achieving the SDGs*, 2018, p. 33.

¹²³ UNEP, *Gender and environment statistics: Unlocking information for action and measuring the SDGs*, 2019.

¹²⁴ UN Women, *Gender Equality as an Accelerator for Achieving the SDGs*, 2018.

¹²⁵ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

¹²⁶ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*, 1979.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

the Advancement of Women, which created measures for achieving gender equality at the national level and promoting women's participation in development activities.¹²⁸ The 1995 *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* expanded upon these measures and established a framework for global actors with recommended actions to empower women economically, politically, and socially.¹²⁹ The *Beijing Declaration* recognized that gender equality “is a condition for people-centered sustainable development.”¹³⁰ More recently, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted a 2015 resolution on guidelines for CSW's work in aligning women's empowerment with sustainable development.¹³¹ This resolution called for CSW to identify areas of need to incorporate gender-mainstreaming and contribute to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.¹³²

Regional work and coordination also contribute to achieving women's empowerment.¹³³ The African Union issued the *Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa*, which over half of its members have signed, designating 2010–2020 as the African Women's Decade.¹³⁴ In June 2018, UN Women and African Member States held an SDG Consultative Meeting to track progress on gender equality and launched Thematic Regional Reference Groups, think-tanks to fulfill the goals of gender-sensitive development frameworks in Africa.¹³⁵ The Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean's *Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean* in 2016 adopted the Regional Gender Agenda with approaches that guide public policies and implementation of gender equality.¹³⁶ The agenda's incorporation at the national level has led to gender-sensitive laws and policies.¹³⁷ Additionally, the Pacific Islands Forum, through its *Pacific Islands Gender Equality Declaration*, committed to accelerate efforts to close the gender gap by increasing women's leadership roles and strengthening consultations with civil society.¹³⁸

Role of the International System

The UN Development Programme's (UNDP) *Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021* prioritizes dismantling barriers to women's economic empowerment, addressing gender-based violence, supporting women's leadership and decision-making, and promoting gender-responsive actions to conflict and natural disasters.¹³⁹ UNDP's Inclusive and Equitable Local Development Programme, which was created in partnership with UN Women, establishes local projects for women, and UNDP's Gender Equality Seal program certifies public and private organizations' work towards closing the gender gap.¹⁴⁰

UN Women is the primary UN entity working to empower women and girls.¹⁴¹ UN Women provides gendered assessments on the progress of SDG implementation and guidance on closing the

¹²⁸ World Conference to review and appraise the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, *Report of the World Conference to review and appraise the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace Nairobi*, 1985.

¹²⁹ UN Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action/Beijing +5 Declaration and Outcome*, 1995.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ ECOSOC, *Economic and Social Council Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/RES/2015/6)*, 2015.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ UN Women, *Regional and Country Coordination*, 2019.

¹³⁴ UN Women, *Africa*, 2019.

¹³⁵ UN Women, *Report and Recommendations from the Regional Consultations on SDGs Localization and Implementation in East and Southern Africa*, 2018, pp. 3-4.

¹³⁶ ECLAC, *The 2030 Agenda and the Regional Gender Agenda: Synergies for equality in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2017, p. 16.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ UN Women, *Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific*, 2018, p. 23

¹³⁹ UNDP, *UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021*, 2018.

¹⁴⁰ UN Women, *Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2018.

¹⁴¹ UN Women, *UN Women Annual Report 2018 – 2019*, 2019, pp. 5-9; UN Women, *UN Women Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021*, 2017.

gender gap.¹⁴² Regional conferences, like the 2017 conference on The Role of Women in Sustainable Development Goals organized by UN Women, UNDP, and the Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation, discuss women’s impact on sustainable development and connect gender equality and the SDGs.¹⁴³ UN Women also funds civil society organizations (CSOs) through its grant-making mechanism, the Fund for Gender Equality (FGE).¹⁴⁴ In 2018, the FGE funded projects on 14 of the 17 SDGs, which directly impacted 90,000 people and reached 256,000 people on women’s rights.¹⁴⁵ The Sustainable Development Goals Fund is another inter-agency funding mechanism that supports the SDGs by funding and convening public-private partnerships; it is currently funding gender-sensitive programs in 22 Member States.¹⁴⁶

CSOs, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector also support gender-inclusive sustainable development.¹⁴⁷ The 2015 Global Civil Society Dialogue discussed how CSOs could improve collaboration with UN Women and support implementation of women’s empowerment initiatives.¹⁴⁸ Member States work with CSOs and hold national consultations on the challenges of implementing the 2030 Agenda.¹⁴⁹

Gender in the 2030 Agenda

Women’s empowerment increases economic productivity, promotes economic growth, and reduces income inequality.¹⁵⁰ Due to discriminatory social norms and unequal economic resources, women are disproportionately affected by poverty; 122 women for every 100 men aged 25-34 experience extreme poverty.¹⁵¹ SDG 4, Ensure Quality Education, calls for equal education, but 48.1% of girls remain out of school in some regions, with poor women and girls being the most disadvantaged.¹⁵² Education increases productivity and results in higher wages to support economic growth.¹⁵³ The global gender pay gap is 23% and women’s labor participation rate is 31% lower than men’s.¹⁵⁴ Women’s lower wages and lower bargaining power reduces their share of labor income, negatively impacting the economy and their ability to contribute to sustainable development.¹⁵⁵

Women perform 2.6 times more unpaid domestic work than men and are also primarily responsible for water collection in 80% of households without running water, reducing their ability to participate in the economic activities and further their education outside the home.¹⁵⁶ Unpaid work places constraints on women’s time and ability to seek paid employment, which would contribute to economic growth.¹⁵⁷

¹⁴² UN Women, *Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2018.

¹⁴³ UN Women, *The Role of Women in Sustainable Development Goals conference*, 2017.

¹⁴⁴ UN Women, *Fund for Gender Equality Annual Report 2017 – 2018*, 2018, p. 8.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 19-21.

¹⁴⁶ SDG Fund, *Who We Are*, 2019; SDG Fund, *Gender Mainstreaming*, 2019.

¹⁴⁷ UN Women, *Towards Planet 50-50 by 2030: UN Women Global Civil Society Dialogue: Galvanizing Action for Accountability and Impact*, 2015.

¹⁴⁸ UN Women, *Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2018, p. 40.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 66.

¹⁵⁰ UN Women, *Gender equality and inclusive growth: Economic policies to achieve sustainable development*, 2019, p. 12.

¹⁵¹ UN Women, *Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2018, p. 76.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, pp. 83-84.

¹⁵³ UN Women, *Gender equality and inclusive growth: Economic policies to achieve sustainable development*, 2018, p. 10.

¹⁵⁴ UN Women, *Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2018, pp. 108-109.

¹⁵⁵ UN Women, *Gender equality and inclusive growth: Economic policies to achieve sustainable development*, 2019, p. 109.

¹⁵⁶ UN Women, *Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2018, pp. 104-105, 108-109.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 13.

Women-centered economic initiatives have a positive gender-multiplier effect and help fulfill the targets for SDG 8 on promoting more inclusive economic growth.¹⁵⁸

Women in leadership roles and active participation in decision-making processes can also enhance sustainable development efforts.¹⁵⁹ Worldwide, women hold just 23.7% of parliamentary seats.¹⁶⁰ Electoral gender quotas, along with other temporary special measures, have increased the number of women serving in government, particularly in Africa and Latin America, but less than half of Member States have set a legislated quota for women in office.¹⁶¹ Increased women's political participation has had a positive effect on public spending and social services.¹⁶² Similarly, in the private sector, women hold less than a third of senior and middle level management positions, even though female representation on corporate boards and managerial positions is associated with higher stock prices and profits.¹⁶³

Diminishing natural resources and climate change disproportionately affects women, especially in developing countries.¹⁶⁴ Climate change exacerbates extreme weather and natural disasters, in which women and children are 14 times more likely to die than men.¹⁶⁵ One fourth of all economically active women are engaged in agriculture, and they will be directly impacted by the detrimental effects of climate change and the reduction of agricultural yields.¹⁶⁶ Women are vital to global food production, yet are more likely to report food insecurity in nearly two-thirds of countries because of lack of access to agricultural inputs to increase yields and food due to unequal gender relations in households.¹⁶⁷

Sustainable Development in the 21st Century

Data Collection

As global connectivity has increased, data collection and analysis are increasingly being used to help guide policy decisions and programs by identifying which policies are effective and which need to be adjusted to maximize women's empowerment and sustainable development.¹⁶⁸ Monitoring SDGs from a gender perspective is currently uneven, with six of the SDGs lacking gender-specific indicators.¹⁶⁹ Despite the fact that the lack of access to clean water and sanitation disproportionately affects women, data collection for SDG 6 does not produce gendered information because of a lack of coordination, inconsistent methodology, and different quality of data from Member States.¹⁷⁰ There are some efforts to improve data collection, including UN Women's Making Every Woman and Girl Count program, which provides financial and technical support to Member States to improve the process of how gender statistics are collected, used, and accessed.¹⁷¹

Big data can help monitor national trends on women's empowerment, but there are limitations and the potential for inaccuracies, especially as not all women have access to technology.¹⁷² CSOs and the private sector play an important role in data collection by providing accountability with separate, independent monitoring and data collection on SDGs.¹⁷³ For example, Equal Measures 2030 is a civil society and private sector partnership that provides women's organizations with an independent review

¹⁵⁸ UN Women, *Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2018, p. 101.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 98.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 119-124.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹⁶⁸ UN Women, *Issue in Brief: Making Women and Girls Visible: Gender Data Gaps and Why They Matter*, 2018.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² UN Women, *Gender Equality and Big Data*, 2018.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

on the implementation of the SDGs and evaluates the influence of national gender-related laws and policies through a new SDG Gender Index.¹⁷⁴ More accurate data collection provides gender advocates with insights on working policies, marginalized groups, and knowledge gaps on SDG implementation.¹⁷⁵

Financing to Support Women's Empowerment

Women's issues have historically been underfunded, and underinvestment in gender equality is particularly impactful.¹⁷⁶ UN Women's 2015 *Addis Ababa Action Plan on Transformative Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment* includes new commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment outlined in the 2030 Agenda.¹⁷⁷ This plan calls for tax incentives for women-owned assets; investments in social infrastructure, global trade, finance, and investment agreements benefitting women; and increased funding to sufficiently support women's rights organizations.¹⁷⁸ CSW also called upon Member States to support gender mainstreaming through funding national measures.¹⁷⁹

More developed Member States finance development efforts to support women's empowerment initiatives in less developed countries.¹⁸⁰ Nearly 40% of allocable aid from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries funds programs targeting gender equality as a significant or principal objective; this level is higher than before but funding for programs dedicated to gender equality remains low.¹⁸¹ Public-private partnerships can also support gender-sensitive programs and corporate taxes can help governments finance such programs.¹⁸² Inadequate funding and low numbers of solely women-focused funded programs are reoccurring issues, along with accountability for integrated gender equality in national budgets and development assistance.¹⁸³

Conclusion

Promoting gender equality is a cross-cutting component of the 2030 Agenda; empowering women results in advances to all the SDGs.¹⁸⁴ Improved data collection and disaggregation of gender-specific data may help in policy assessments and improve efforts to achieve the SDGs, as would securing adequate funding to support the advancement of gender equity and women's empowerment.¹⁸⁵ With the 5th anniversary of the *2030 Agenda*, 10th anniversary of UN Women, and 25th anniversary of the *Beijing Declaration* in 2020, UN agencies, Member States, and civil society can continue to build upon previous work and make further progress in achieving women's empowerment and sustainable development.¹⁸⁶

Further Research

Delegates can consider the following questions: What are the major challenges faced by the international community in taking a gender-based approach to address the SDGs? How can implementation of the SDGs be improved? Which SDGs are most impacted by women's empowerment measures? In what ways can global actors collaborate and hold each other accountable for implementing women's empowerment initiatives to promote sustainable development?

¹⁷⁴ Equal Measures 2030, *Data and Analysis*, 2019.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ UN Women, *Financing: Why it matters for women and girls*, 2015.

¹⁷⁷ Third International Conference Financing for Development, *Addis Ababa Action Plan on Transformative Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, 2015.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ UN CSW, *Women's Empowerment and the Link to Sustainable Development 2016 Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions*, 2016, p. 3.

¹⁸⁰ OCED, *Development finance for gender equality and women's empowerment: A snapshot*, 2019.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² UN Women, *Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2018.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 100.

¹⁸⁵ UN Women, *Issue in Brief: Making Women and Girls Visible: Gender Data Gaps and Why They Matter*, 2018, p. 4; UN Women, *Financing: Why it matters for women and girls*, 2015.

¹⁸⁶ UN Women, *UN Women Annual Report 2018 – 2019*, 2019, p. 40.

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This report from UN Women provides a comprehensive assessment of progress, gaps, and challenges in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from a gender perspective. The report monitors global and regional trends in achieving the SDGs for women and girls based on available data and provides practical guidance for the implementation of gender-responsive policies and accountability processes. As a source of data and policy analysis, the report is a key reference and accountability tool for policymakers, women's organizations, the UN system, and other stakeholders. In particular, Chapter 3 Monitoring Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda, is helpful in providing statistics and an overview of the SDGs.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2017). *UN Women Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021*. Retrieved 17 February 2019 from: <https://undocs.org/en/UNW/2017/6/Rev.1>

The Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021 outlines UN Women's strategic direction, objectives, and approaches to support efforts to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. It supports the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and contributes to the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This strategic plan is key to gaining a better understanding of how UN Women plans to address women's empowerment-related issues from now until 2021 and serves as a guide for actions that international, national, and civil society actors can take in their efforts to promote gender equality.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2019). *UN Women Annual Report 2018 – 2019* [Report]. Retrieved 20 June 2019 from: <http://annualreport.unwomen.org/en/2019>

The Annual Report documents UN Women's work fostering global women's empowerment and gender equality. It highlights some key initiatives and provides summary financial statements, a list of new programs and projects, and contact information. This year's annual report highlights some of the key results achieved in 2018 – 2019 in strengthening global norms and standards; increasing women's leadership and political participation; enhancing economic empowerment; ending violence against women and girls; engaging women in all aspects of peace, security, and humanitarian actions; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. The report provides an overview of what UN Women has accomplished so far, which will help determine what steps need to be taken in the future.

United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. (2016). *Women's Empowerment and the Link to Sustainable Development 2016 Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions* [Report]. Retrieved 22 February 2019 from: <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/60/csw60%20agreed%20conclusions%20conclusions%20en.pdf?la=en&vs=4409>

The agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission at its 60th session provide a detailed roadmap on how to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in a gender-responsive manner to ensure that no woman or no girl is left behind. This report is important in understanding how the Commission's role in facilitating implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and what actions it would like other actors to take. The report identifies five areas to be addressed: strengthening normative, legal and policy frameworks; financing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; strengthening women's leadership and women's full and equal participation in decision-making; strengthening gender-responsive data collection; and enhancing national institutional arrangements.



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (2015). *Monitoring Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* [Report]. Retrieved 24 February 2019 from: <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/indicatorpaper-en-final.pdf?la=en&vs=212>

The outcome document was adopted in September 2015. From a gender perspective, the SDGs and targets addresses many concerns and, therefore, represent a significant step forward from to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As a result of a wide-ranging consultation process with United Nations Member States, civil society, and international organizations, this position paper sets out UN Women's suggestions for global indicators to effectively monitor how the SDGs are being implemented for women and girls to provide feedback on current policies and guide future policies.

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